UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR BUREAU OF MINES

Mineral resource potential of Mazatzal Wilderness and Contiguous Rare II Further Planning Area, Gila, Maricopa, and Yavapai Counties, Arizona

U.S. Bureau of Mines Mineral Land Assessment MLA 56-82 1982

By Ellis, C.E.

This open file report summarizes the results of a Bureau of Mines wilderness study and will be incorporated in a joint report with the U.S. Geological Survey. The report is preliminary and has not been edited or reviewed for conformity with the U.S. Bureau of Mines editorial standards. Work on this study was conduced by personnel from Intermountain Field Operations Center, Building 20, Denver Federal Center, Denver, CO 80225.

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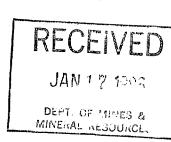
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR (BUREAU OF MINES)

MINERAL-RESOURCE POTENTIAL OF THE MAZATZAL WILDERNESS AND CONTIGUOUS RARE II FURTHER PLANNING AREA, GILA, MARICOPA, AND YAVAPAI COUNTIES, ARIZONA

By Clarence E. Ellis

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Mineral Surveys Related to U.S. Forest Service Wilderness Areas and RARE II Further Planning Areas

The Wilderness Act (Public Law 88-577, September 3, 1964) and related acts require the U.S. Bureau of Mines and the U.S. Geological Survey to survey certain areas on Federal lands to determine their mineral-resource potential. Results must be made available to the public and be submitted to the President and the Congress. This report presents the results of a mineral-resource survey of the Mazatzal Wilderness in the Tonto National Forest, Gila, Maricopa, and Yavapai Counties, Arizona. The Mazatzal Primitive Area was established under Regulation L-20 of the Secretary of Agriculture in 1938. The status was changed to wilderness in 1940 under Regulation U-1 of the Secretary of Agriculture. With passage of the Wilderness Act the Mazatzal Wilderness was incorporated into the National Wilderness Preservation System. The Mazatzal Wilderness Contiguous Roadless Area was classified as a further planning area during the Second Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II) by the U.S. Forest Service, January 1979.

CONTENTS

| | Page |
|--|------|
| Introduction | 1 |
| Location, size, and geographic setting | 1 |
| Mining activity | 3 |
| Mining districts and mineralized areas | 3 |
| Mining districts | 3 |
| Payson | 3 |
| Sunflower | 3 |
| Mining claims | 4 |
| Known mineralized areas | 4 |
| Copper Mountain | 4 |
| Mineral Canyon | 4 |
| Copper Camp Creek | 5 |
| Horseshoe Dam | 5 |
| Past and present mining activity and production data | 5 |
| Resource estimates | 6 |
| Payson district | 7 |
| Sunflower district | 7 |
| Assessment of mineral-resource potential | 8 |
| Gold | 8 |
| Silver | 10 |
| Copper | 10 |
| Mercury | 10 |

CONTENTS-CONTINUED

| | | Page |
|------------|--|------|
| | Lead | 11 |
| | Uranium | . 11 |
| References | 5 | 12 |
| | ILLUSTRATIONS | |
| Plate 1. | Mine and prospect map of the Mazatzal Wilderness and Contiguous RARE II Further Planning Area, Gila, Maricopa, and Yavapai Counties, Arizona | |
| Plate 2. | Maps of workings in and near the Mazatzal Wilderness and Contiguous RARE II Further Planning Area | |
| Figure 1. | Index Map of the Mazatzal Wilderness and Contiguous RARE II Further Planning Area | 2 |
| Figure 2. | Map of the Mazatzal Wilderness and Contiguous RARE II Further Planning Area showing preliminary determination of mineral-resource potential | 9 |

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By Clarence E. Ellis, U.S. Bureau of Mines

INTRODUCTION

Field work was carried out by U.S. Bureau of Mines personnel Clarence E. Ellis, Don Brown, Dave Scott, Carl Almquist, John Briggs, and Mark Anders during spring and fall of 1979 and spring of 1980.

Location, size, and geographic setting

The Mazatzal Wilderness covers 205,346 acres (831 km²) of the Tonto National Forest in Gila, Maricopa, and Yavapai Counties, east-central Arizona (fig. 1). On the west, north, and northeast sides of the Mazatzal Wilderness, the Mazatzal Wilderness Contiguous RARE II Further Planning Area covers 83,750 acres (338.9 km²). The RARE II area is also part of the Tonto National Forest, and within the three named counties. Payson, Ariz., is 8 mi (13 km) east of the area, and Phoenix, Ariz., is 43 mi (69 km) south-southwest.

Arizona Highway 87 is 1 to 8 mi (1.6 to 13 km) east of the edge of the Wilderness. The Horseshoe Dam and Verde Hot Springs roads approach the western boundary of the RARE II area. Powerline roads parallel the west side of the RARE II area and touch the southeast corner of the Wilderness. Forest Service, mine, and ranch roads reach both boundaries at many locations and enter the Wilderness at the Doll Baby Ranch on the East Verde River.

The Verde River flows through the RARE II area west of the Wilderness, and the East Verde River cuts through the northern third of the Wilderness. Elevation ranges from 7,903 ft (2,409 m) on Mazatzal Peak to about 2,200 ft (670 m) near Horseshoe Reservior.

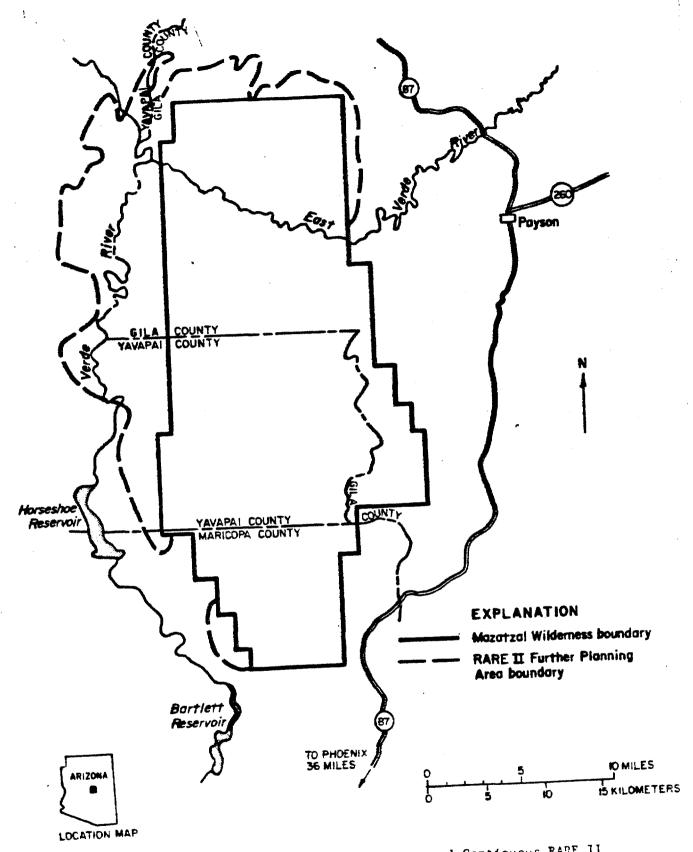


Figure 1.-Index map of the Mazatzal Wilderness and Contiguous RARE II
Further Planning Area.

Mining activity

Mining activity in the area peaked in the 1880's, and has since remained at a low level. In 1979, an adit was being driven at the Sunflower Mine (Plate 1), and the road to the Casterson Mine was being repaired; both activities, however, were curtailed by 1980. In recent years there has been trenching at the Sunflower Mine; drilling and trenching at Mineral Canyon on the eastern boundary; trenching, geochemical, and geophysical prospecting, and minor copper-silver production at Copper Mountain inside the Wilderness; drilling for uranium near Horseshoe Dam near the RARE II area; and applications were filed with the U.S. Forest Service for permission to drill at Copper Camp Creek inside the Wilderness.

MINING DISTRICTS AND MINERALIZED AREAS

Mining Districts

Payson

The Payson, or Green Valley, mining district (Plate 1) surrounds Payson, except on the north. The part of the district adjacent to the Wilderness extends from just north of the East Verde River, to Eisenhauer Canyon on the south. Near the eastern Wilderness boundary, on gold-bearing quartz veins in a variety of igneous rocks of Precambrian age, are the Casterson, Collom, Crackerjack, Gowan, and House Mines (Plate 2). Except for the Gowan vein, which is traceable for possibly a half mile (800 m), the veins in these mines pinch out along strike within a few hundred feet (tens of meters), but extend deeper than the limits of development. They appear to fill tension gashes related to nearby major faults.

Sunflower |

The Sunflower mercury district (Plate 1) is in an east-northeast-trending belt of Precambrian schist (Ransome, 1915) of the Alder Group near the southeast corner of the Wilderness. Just inside the Wilderness, volcanic rocks

cover the schist. The Cornucopia, Gold Creek, Mercuria, Oneida, Pine Butte, Pine Mountain, and Sunflower Mines (Plate 2) are near the Wilderness. Although on the mercury trend, the Storey Mine inside the Wilderness, is a silver-lead-gold deposit. Lithology or stratigraphy, rather than structure appears to have controlled ore deposition.

Mining Claims

A patented claim, the Blue Lode(?), is located inside the Wilderness in sec. 10, T. 9 N., R. 7 E. Large blocks of unpatented claims are at Copper Mountain, Copper Camp Creek, Mineral Canyon, Horseshoe Dam, Sunflower, and House Creek. Because few old claim descriptions are definitive, many mines and prospects cannot be correlated with claims.

Known Mineralized Areas

Copper Mountain

Just south of the East Verde River, and 1 to 5 mi (1.6 to 8 km) inside the Wilderness, the Copper Mountain group consists of a block of over 100 claims. Several miles of bulldozer roads, a 110- by 60- by 100-ft-deep (32- by 20- by 30-m-deep) open cut, and many old workings that are caved except for three short adits occur within the claim block. West of Bullfrog Canyon, silver is dominant in faults and sheared quartz veins in graywackes and siltstones near major faults. East of Bullfrog Canyon, the copper minerals chalcopyrite, bornite, and copper oxides are dominant, occurring as disseminations, blebs, and disseminations in quartz veins. Country rocks are mafic volcanics.

Mineral Canyon

A network of bulldozer roads covers the spur ridge on the north side of Mineral Canyon and extends into the Wilderness. A block of 56 claims covering this area has been known variously as the Big Penny and Big Bear group.

Freeport Exploration Co., Miami Copper Co., Phelps Dodge Corp., Phoenix Ventures, Pinal Copper Corp., and Viola Mac examined the property between 1957 and 1977. Disseminated copper oxides, occur in a brecciated complex of intermediate volcanic and plutonic rocks near a major fault intersection. The mineralized zone extends at least 1,500 ft (460 m) into the Wilderness.

Copper Camp Creek

Copper oxides are found at the Copper Cliff group of 22 claims in the center of the southern quarter of the Wilderness. Over a dozen pits and trenches, a 60-ft (20-m) shaft, and a 390-ft (120-m) adit are in the mineralized zone. Drilling was proposed by the claim owners in 1972, and recommended by a U.S. Forest Service examiner (U.S.F.S., 1973), but never carried out. Country rocks are Alder Group, mostly of volcanic derivation.

Horseshoe Dam

Low-grade uranium occurrences are present in Tertiary lake-basin sediments east of Horseshoe Dam. Two blocks of 150 claims each have been located, and at least three holes drilled. Some of these claims are in the RARE II area. A sample taken across a 4 in. (10 cm) bed assayed 165-ppm U308, but the next highest assay from beds in this basin was only 18 ppm.

Past and Present Mining Activity and Production Data

Gold was discovered in about 1875 near Payson, and the Payson mining district had its peak between 1881 and 1886 (Lausen and Wilson, 1925). Production from that period was not recorded. The district was more or less idle until the 1930's, after which there was sporadic production. Between 1938 and 1956 the Casterson, Collom, Crackerjack, and Gowan Mines produced (USBM Files):

gold: 199 oz (6,190 g)

silver: 426 oz (13.2 kg)

copper: 17,596 lb (7,990 kg)

In 1967, 33.5 tons (30.4 t) of ore containing 938 lb (426 kg) of copper and 485 oz (15.1 kg) of silver were produced from the Copper Mountain open cut (USFS files).

Exploration for copper has been moderately active at Mineral Canyon from 1956 to 1977, at Copper Mountain from 1964 to present, at Copper Camp Creek from 1955 to 1972, and at Eisenhauer Canyon in 1957. Increasing precious metal prices have spurred renewed activity at several properties near Payson.

Mercury was discovered in the Sunflower mining district in October, 1911, (Ransome, 1915), which has remained intermittantly active until the present, although there has been little production since the 1960's. At present the only activity is at the Sunflower Mine.

The Pine Mountain and Sunflower Mines were the major mercury producers near the Wilderness. Other properties combined have contributed minor quantities of mercury. The Storey (Tri-Metals) Mine produced no mercury, and various mercury mines produced gold, silver, and copper. Recorded production (USBM and USFS Files except as noted) from 1913 to 1965 is:

| mercury: | 3,973 flasks | (137 t) (Beckman and Kerns, 1965) |
|----------|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| gold: | 764 oz | (23.8 kg) |
| silver: | 1,095 oz | (34.1 kg) |
| copper: | 2,140 1ь | (970 kg) |
| lead: | 27,650 1ь | (12.5 t) |

Resource Estimates

Deposits in, or within a half mile (0.8 km) of the Wilderness or RARE II area are listed here. Estimates are based on Bureau of Mines mapping and 570 Bureau of Mines samples taken in area. At the time of the study—1979 to 1981—all resources except the Storey Mine were sub-economic.

Payson District

Combined inferred resources of the Casterson and Collom Mines, just outside the Wilderness, are 52,000 tons (47,000 t) containing 0.07 oz of gold and 0.7 oz of silver per ton (2.3 g of gold and 25 g of silver per metric ton).

Copper Mountain has a moderate size copper-silver resource entirely inside the Wilderness. The mineralized area is 8,000 by 200 ft (2,400 by 60 m) with high-grade spots.

Mineral Canyon has a moderate size copper resource which is partly inside the Wilderness. The mineralized area is 3,000 by 800 ft (900 by 240 m).

Sunflower District

The Sunflower Mine has an inferred resource of 26,000 tons (24,000 t) containing 0.14-percent mercury just outside the Wilderness, and an inferred resource of 3,600 tons (3,300 t) containing 0.21-percent mercury just inside the Wilderness.

Inside the Wilderness, the Storey Mine has an inferred resource of 78,000 tons (71,000 t) containing 0.06 oz of gold and 1.9 oz of silver per ton (2.1 g of gold and 65 g of silver per metric ton) and 3.9-percent lead. This resource is calculated from surface exposures, as the workings are all caved. The known production has been subtracted from the calculated resource, however, any unrecorded production which may have occurred would also subtract from the quantity stated.

Copper Camp Creek has a moderate size copper resource entirely inside the Wilderness. The mineralized area is 3,000 by 200 ft (900 by 60 m).

ASSESSMENT OF MINERAL-RESOURCE POTENTIAL

This is a preliminary assessment based on Bureau of Mines data gathered during this investigation. Figure 2 shows the areas determined to have mineral-resource potential. For purposes of this report the following definitions are used: small resources/reserves - less than 100,000 tons (91,000 t), medium-size resources/reserves - 100,000 to one million tons (91,000 to 910,000 t), large resources/reserves-more than 1 million tons (910,000 t).

The Mazatzal Wilderness has copper, mercury, silver, gold, and lead resources. Dense chaparall and rugged terrain inhibit prospecting now, as in the past, and exploration would be difficult and costly.

Go1d

Gold has been mined from quartz veins in Precambrian rocks lying near the Deadman, Verde, and Sheep Mountain faults mapped by Wrucke and Conway (in preparation) and the Payson granite. Except for the Gowan vein, these veins persist only a few hundred feet (tens of meters) along strike. No pinching of the veins down-dip was observed by the Bureau of Mines, nor was it reported by Lausen and Wilson (1925). Only free-milling gold was recoverable when the Payson district was active; therefore, development rarely proceeded more than tens of feet below the oxidized part of the vein. Vein configuration and proximity to the faults mentioned suggest that these veins filled tension gashes related to fault movement.

A moderate potential for gold exists in small- to medium-size, high - to moderate-grade veins in Precambrian rocks near these faults. Gold is expected as a byproduct of copper or mercury deposits.

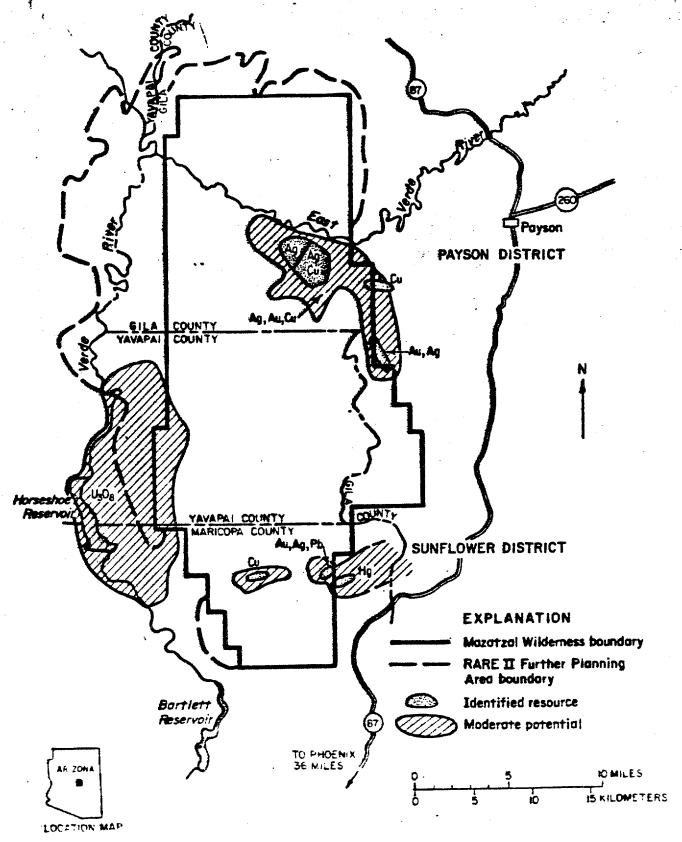


Figure 2.-Map of the Mazatzal Wilderness and Contiguous RARE II Further Planning Area showing preliminary determination of mineral-resource potential.

Silver

Silver accompanies gold in the vein systems described above, and would be a byproduct of mining copper or mercury deposits. Relationships of silver to copper are unclear west of Bullfrog Canyon in the sedimentary sequence of the Copper Mountain deposit. With this exception, silver potential is related directly to gold, mercury, and copper potential.

Copper

Some copper may be syngenetic with Precambrian volcanic-sedimentary rocks (upper Alder Group and Yavapai(?) Group), but if so, it is very spotty. Concentrations of copper from the Payson granite and the possible older sources are localized in brecciated zones related to intersection of the Verde and Deadman Fault, intersection of the Sheep Mountain Fault and local faults related to Tertiary plugs, or in permeable host rocks near major faults and the granite.

A moderate potential for copper exists in medium-size, low- to moderate-grade deposits in basic- to intermediate-volcanic rocks of Precambrian age which are near structural intersections and the Payson granite. A moderate potential for copper in small, high-grade deposits exists in Precambrian basic- to intermediate-volcanic rocks. The Mazatzal Wilderness and RARE II area is not a porphyry copper environment. Some copper would be a byproduct of mining gold-silver veins, and rarely might be recovered from mercury deposits.

Mercury

Alder Group rocks are the only host in this area for more than trace amounts of mercury. Quartz-sericite or chlorite schists are favored, probably due to permeability of the beds, or between the beds. The mercury, probably derived from the Payson granite and remobilized by the heat from Tertiary

stocks, was driven along permeable paths in the Alder Group beds. Deposition was probably a function of temperature.

A moderate potential for mercury in small, low- to moderate-grade deposits exists in the Precambrian Alder Group in proximity to the Payson granite, Sheep Mountain Fault and a Tertiary stock, which is to say within the present Sunflower district.

Lead

Lead is a major constituent of the Storey and Stingy Lady veins, but is otherwise uncommon in the Mazatzal Wilderness and RARE II area. These veins are short along strike, but their behavior along dip is unknown. Both are near major faults; the Storey is near the Payson granite, and the Stingy Lady within it.

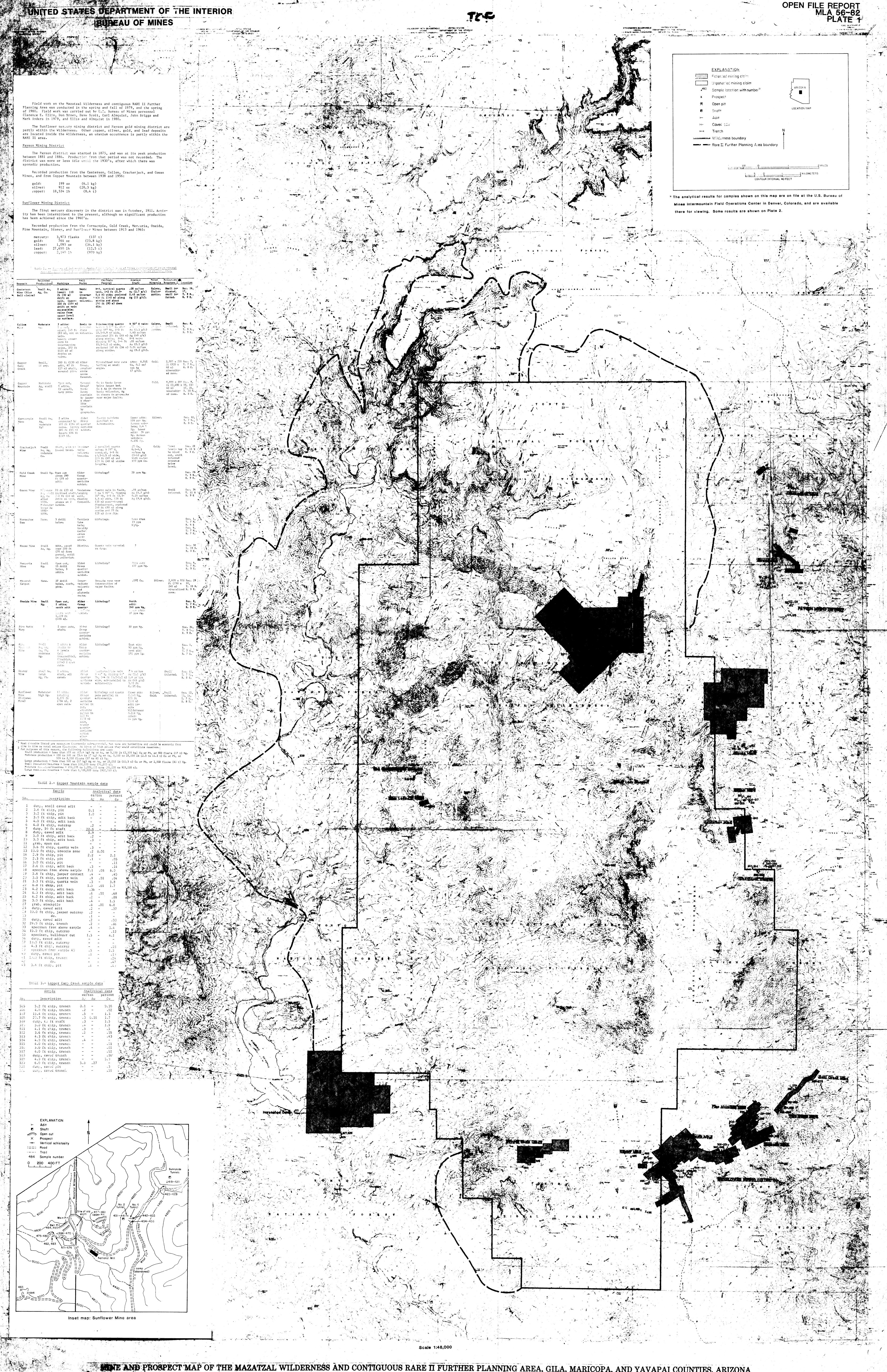
A low potential exists for lead in small, high-grade vein deposits in Precambrian rocks in or near the Payson granite near major faults.

Uranium

Anomalous, but very low-grade uranium is found in tuffaceous sandstones in a Tertiary basin-fill. A moderate potential for uranium in medium-size, low-grade deposits exists in the Tertiary sediments in the Verde River valley, particularly in the area receiving detritus from the uranium-bearing stock in Tangle Creek.

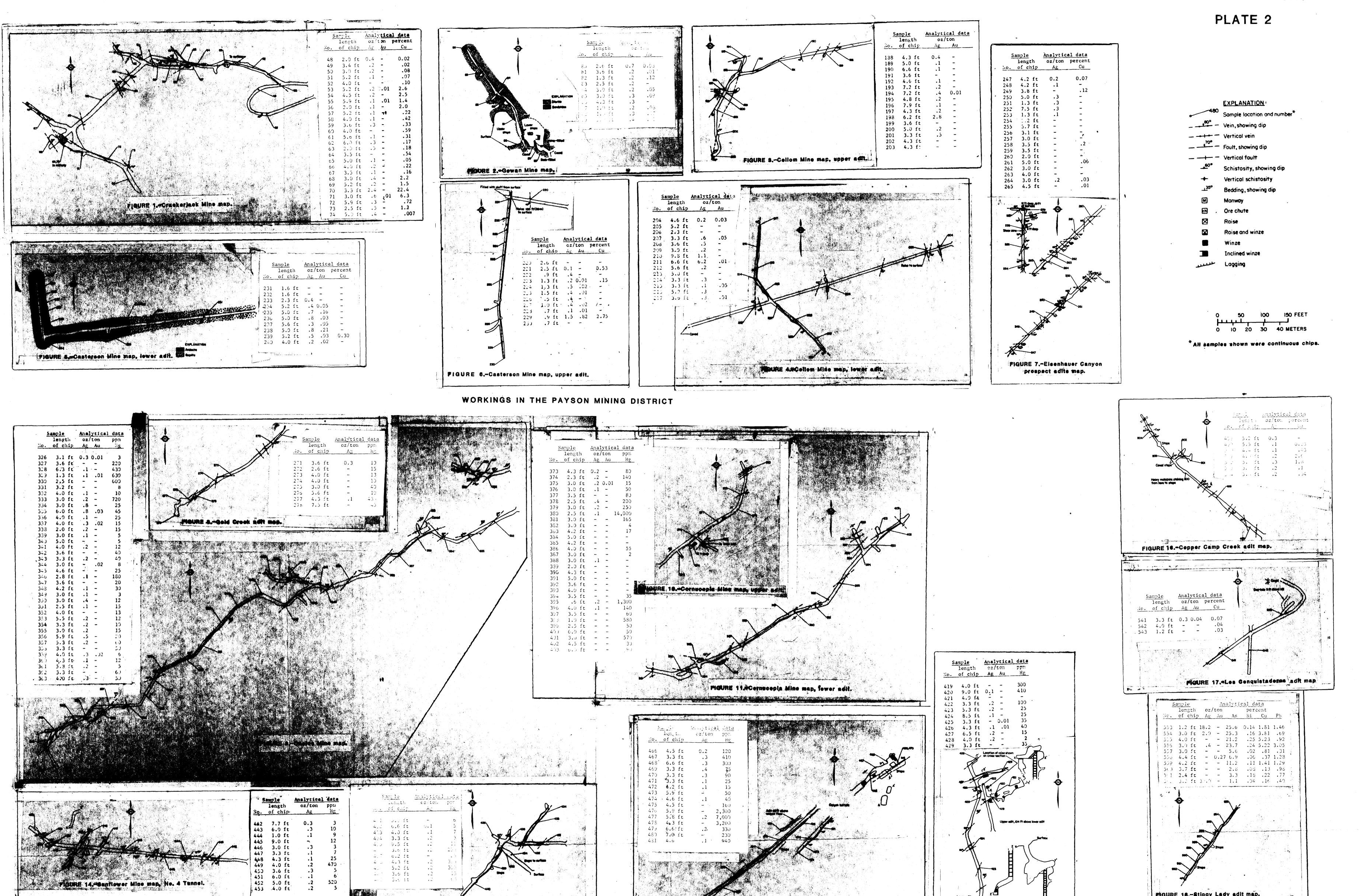
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The Peet 1964; Rover Peak, 1967; Strawberry, 1967; Table Mountain, 1967;

Tule Mesa, 1967; Verde Hot Springs, 1967; Wet Bottom Mesa, 1967.



MAPS OF WORKINGS IN AND NEAR THE MAZATZAL WILDERNESS AND CONTIGUOUS RARE II AREA
BY
CLARENCE E. ELLIS

WORKINGS IN THE SUNFLOWER MINING DISTRICT